MR. M. NILAKANDA PILLAI: I rise to a point of order. I thought I could put supplementary questions and get answers in respect of all the parts of question No. 23. I did not get any opportunity to do so.

PRESIDENT: You should have gone on asking your questions one after another. The Secretary to the Legislative Council waited for a sufficient length of time, and seeing that no further questions were forthcoming from you, he passed on to the next question.

MR. M. NILAKANDA PILLAI: I thought of putting some questions also, under the parts other than part (*a*).

PRESIDENT: I am sorry that you were not sufficiently on the alert. The Secretary to the Council was in order.

MR. N. KUMARAN: Sir, before we proceed to the business of the day, I should like to clear a doubt with respect to an item of procedure. The rules do not require that motions at the budget discussion stage should be seconded, but some doubt has arisen on that point.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: The rules do not require that a motion relating to the voting of grants should be seconded.

PRESIDENT. Such motions need not be seconded.

The Council resumed the discussion on the demands for grants for 1098.

DEMAND FOR GRANTS.—(*contd.*)

Demand II—Taxes on Income.

PRESIDENT: The question is that a sum not exceeding Rs. '19 lakh *minus* Rs. 9,636 be granted under Demand II—Taxes on Income.

The grant was made.

Demand III—Salt.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, I rise to move for a grant not exceeding Rs. 1·57 lakhs under Demand III—Salt.

***Motion* 23.**

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI: Sir, I beg to make the following motion:

23. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 1·57 lakhs under Demand III by Rs. 75,000.

I do not wish to say anything against an indigenous industry such as our salt culture. What prompted me to make this motion is the provision in the budget for two or three items which, I believe, can either be avoided or at any rate be reduced.

The first is the provision of Rs. 36,000 for petty construction and repairs. The details for this are given in the form of a footnote:—Rs. 20,000 for construction of officers' quarters at Tamaracolam, Rs. 2,000 for construction of an office in Mr. Karayalar's new *allom*, and Rs. 10,000 for the completion of certain incomplete works connected with channels and bars.

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[Mr. N. Padmanabha Pillai.]

In regard to the first item, we ought to remember that a cut to the extent of over Rs. 5 lakhs has been made in the P. W. D. budget and thus some of the urgent works have been postponed. As such I fail to see the necessity or the urgency for such a costly building for the officers' quarters. The officers at Tamaracolam managed to do without it all this time and I think that this item can, for the present, be deleted. I may here bring to the notice of the House a provision made elsewhere, *viz.*, Rs. 10,000, for the construction of quarters for the Assistant Excise Commissioner and staff at Arukutty. There the amount provided is only one-half of the amount that is provided here. I submit that no necessity has been made out for such a large expenditure for the officers' quarters at Tamaracolam under the present financial conditions. At any rate, the amount provided is excessive.

MR. K. GEORGE: Sir, let me make a correction. I may say that it is not for the officers alone, but for the entire staff that quarters have to be built.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI: Yes, it is for the Assistant Excise Commissioner and his staff.

Coming to the next two details, I fail to see why Government money should be spent for constructing an office in Mr. Karayalar's private *allom* and for works connected with channels and bars. I understand that there is only one *allom* worth the name that works under the monopoly system. All the others are worked by the lessees themselves. Their terms are that all the expenditure connected with salt banks are to be met by Government, while the expenditure on works is to be met by the licensees themselves. And this can be seen more or less from the Administration Report for 1096, where it is stated that the licensees themselves construct and maintain the necessary works in the new factories, while the Darbar does it in the old factories. I submit that I fail to see the necessity for constructing offices in these private *allom*s. That is the first item that I have to bring to the notice of the House.

The second item to which I wish to draw the attention of the House is the provision of Rs. 50,000 for transport charges of salt. The budget does not give any details for this provision and as such we are not in a position to correctly gauge the necessity or otherwise of the same. In any case one thing is certain—that the provision is excessive. The actuals of 1096 under this head come to only Rs. 2,939. The budget estimate of 1097 is, no doubt, Rs. 90,000, but the revised figure for that year has not been given in the budget. I should think this provision is very excessive and ought to be considerably reduced.

Then the third item that I wish to bring to the notice of the House is the provision for salaries under salt factories. The budget makes provision for 7 Inspectors besides an Assistant Excise Commissioner. There are, I understand, about 8 *allom*s in Tamaracolam and they lie within a radius of 2 miles. The area actually worked was only

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372 acres in 1096. All except one *allom* are worked by lessees and the duties of the Inspector are merely to see whether the lessees do their work. Several of these *alloms* lie contiguously. I am reliably informed that 3 Inspectors will be more than enough for the necessary works and I should therefore plead for a substantial reduction on that account also.

I may also point out to the House that the amount provided for the salaries of these 7 Inspectors for 1098 is almost double the provision in 1097. For 1098 the amount is Rs. 7,136, while for 1097 it was only Rs. 4,000 and odd.

On these grounds, I move for a reduction of Rs. 75,000 from the demand under Salt.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, with regard to the construction of officers' quarters at Tamaracolam, provided for in the allotment of Rs. 36,000, I wish to state that these quarters are not meant for the officers alone, but for the Inspectors, petty officers and peons also.

The great majority of the petty officers and peons employed in the salt factories at Tamaracolam and all the Inspectors as well as the officers in charge of the Salt Factories Circle are not natives of Tamaracolam. The Inspectors, petty officers and peons have to spend most of their time within the factory limits. The nature of their work demands their being as close to the factories as possible. The salt that is manufactured is spread out and stored in heaps in open spaces. These heaps are covered with palmyra or cocoanut leaves. The open spaces are no doubt fenced round with prickly pear. But the fencing is after all a poor protection against theft of salt. Instances of theft of salt are not infrequent. It is therefore in the interests of Government revenue that there should be effective check of the patrol work of subordinates; and this the Inspector will not be able to do if the area of his jurisdiction is further increased. Again, the Inspector should be present when salt is issued out, as he is responsible for the correct weighment and realisation of Government dues. I beg to submit that salt is money and that the precautionary arrangements made to prevent the theft of the same should not be lightly disturbed for the sake of retrenchment which, if insisted upon regardless of actual needs, is likely to prove a very costly step to the Government.

The nearest inhabited place in the neighbourhood of the factories where any sort of accommodation can be obtained for strangers is the Tamaracolam *oor* or village. It is a small village of 1,002 souls with 218 occupied houses, according to the census of 1921. This village can certainly not spare enough houses to accommodate about 160 strangers. Even a casual visitor to the salt factories, especially during the dry season, will be readily struck with the extreme enervating nature of the climate of the place. Ordinary drinking water which is plentiful elsewhere is a costly luxury there to be purchased from a distance of at least two or three miles. The men now employed at Tamaracolam are in a very miserable condition as far as drinking water and dwelling houses are concerned. The result is that every unhappy individual who is sent to the Salt Factory Circle tries to get away from that place on

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[Mr. A. J. Van Ross.]

real or imaginary pretexts. They apply for transfer; they go on leave; and somehow or other they stay away on account of the trouble they are put to for want of houses. Good houses to live in are an inducement to them to stick to the place, and that inducement will certainly promote the interests of the salt factories. I, therefore, submit that it is a very necssary item of expenditure.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: Will Mr. Van Ross tell us for how many persons these quarters are meant?

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Will Mr. Van Ross tell us how many quarters for officers there are at Tamaracolam at present?

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: There are no quarters.

The next item is with regard to the construction of an office in Mr. Karayalar's new *allom*. Mr. Padmanabha Pillai said that Government were not bound to put up any office building for a private *allom* and that the licensees themselves must construct it. I believe there is a misapprehension in his mind. What the agreement says is that we are to construct our own office building. It is a Government office constructed to enable the Inspector to do his work connected with the manufacture of salt. This is a new factory; and that is why we are constructing an office building. In all the other factories, there are Inspectors' offices.

Then, as regards the transport charges of Rs. 50,000, I must say that these charges are recovered by the sale of salt. These charges are to meet the cost of transport from the factories to the salt depôts, either to Trivandrum or to Quilon or Alleppey. In 1096, there was no salt in the factories available for transport to and sale at the salt depôts. In 1097, a quantity of 1,47,304 *maunds* of local salt was transported from Tamaracolam to Trivandrum at a cost of Rs. 39,428. In 1098 also, salt will have to be transported from Tamaracolam to the depôts. Besides this, salt has to be transported from Quilon to the Shencottah salt bankshalls, the cost of which would come to nearly Rs. 2,500. Provision is included for such transport as well.

As for the channels in the old *allom*s, they have to be attended to by Government. The old *allom*s at Tamaracolam, as also the *allom*s at Rajakkamangalam and Colachel, have been neglected for many years. They have not been turning out the quantity of salt they should turn out. On the motion of members in the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, Government spent some money, and as a result we have secured considerable improvement in the outturn of salt. These works are very essential; they would encourage local industry.

As regards the reduction of Inspectors, I beg to submit that, of the seven Inspectors employed in the Salt Factories Circle, five are in charge of the factories in and about Tamaracolam; one is in charge of the salt factory at Rajakkamangalam and one in charge of the salt factory and sea customs house at Colachel. There are eight factories at Tamaracolam and there are only five Inspectors. Wherever possible, one Inspector is

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sometimes given two factories where they are adjacent to each other and where it is found that the Inspector can discharge his duties without detriment to Government revenue. One Inspector is in charge of extension factories Nos. 1 and 11, another is in charge of Puttalam; a third is in charge of the Srimulagopalanathan *allom*; the fourth is in charge of the Srimulakrishnamani and Srisankara *alloms*; and the fifth is in charge of the Tamaracolam old and old extension factories. The area allotted to each Inspector is too much for a single officer to effectively supervise. The duties and obligations imposed by the Salt Rules are of a varied character, and unless there is a responsible officer at the spot, the rules are sure to be evaded with consequent loss of revenue. Almost every provision contained in the Salt Rules fixes the responsibility for its enforcement on the officer in charge of the factory. The responsibility begins with the letting of the brine into the pans and continues till the salt manufactured is issued out and the duty thereon is remitted into the treasury. It will be observed from a perusal of the Salt Rules that the Inspector has barely enough time to attend to the multifarious duties devolving on him. At present, there are two instances where one Inspector manages two factories, but that is where one or both the factories are in an undeveloped state and consequently not doing full work. When the manufacture is in full swing in them, these factories will need separate Inspectors. I must therefore say that, for realising Government revenue, these seven Inspectors are absolutely necessary.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF: Sir, will the Excise Commissioner be pleased to give information as to what the cost of transport is for 100 *maunds* of salt from Bombay to Tuticorin? Half the quantity of the salt that is required for the country is manufactured in the country. If we get salt from outside, what will be the cost per 100 *maunds*?

PRESIDENT: Mr. Van Ross, Mr. Hoogewerf wants the cost per 100 *maunds* of foreign salt and 100 *maunds* of salt manufactured here.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF: I want the transport charges also.

PRESIDENT: Mr. Van Ross may answer the question at the time of his reply.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF: Sir, I beg to know whether a sum of Rs. 10,000 is enough for opening out these channels when Rs. 20,000 is spent upon the construction of officers' quarters. I know there are officers' quarters and peons' quarters in the Tamaracolam, Rajakkamangalam and Colachel *alloms*. I know there is a lot of percolation of fresh water from the irrigation channels into some of these *alloms*. I wish to know whether any provision has been made to prevent percolation. I also wish to be informed whether the licensees are not bound to provide officers' quarters also according to their agreements. Of course, I am aware that, with regard to the old *alloms*, Government have to spend all the money for the construction of these channels. But I wish to know whether the brine-water that is brought in for the old *alloms* does not find a place into the new *alloms*, and whether, under the licenses,

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[Mr. M. R. Madhava Variar.]

some sort of compensation—at least for the construction of these channels—is recovered?

MR. PAUL V. DANIEL: Sir, I think the sum allotted for the construction of officers' quarters at Tamaracolam is too much and that a larger sum ought to have been allotted for the works in connection with channels and bars.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: Sir, I rise to a point of order. The member has got a right only to propose a reduction and not a diversion.

MR. PAUL V. DANIEL: What I mean, Sir, is that there should be a reduction in the amount allotted for the construction of officers' quarters at Tamaracolam. I am of opinion, however, that, in consideration of the present state of our finances, the construction of the said building should be postponed to the next year.

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR: Sir, I rise to oppose the arguments put forward by Mr. Van Ross. I must confess that I am not convinced that no reduction can be made under these items. I believe that considerable reductions can be made. For instance, there are seven Inspectors in the Salt Factories. I am a layman and I do not understand the working of the department. But I think that a separate Inspector is not necessary for each *allom*. Moreover, the duties of these Inspectors are only to supervise the *alloms* during the manufacturing seasons and to weigh 25 per cent. of the salt already weighed by the petty officers. I am of opinion that one Inspector can very well supervise two *alloms*. Weighing is done generally by petty officers. The duty of the Inspector is to ascertain its correctness and to supervise the salt pans during the manufacturing seasons. If my information is correct, I believe seven Inspectors are not at all necessary. Moreover, in certain *alloms*, the extent is only 100 acres, and one Inspector is appointed in such cases to look after each of them. In other cases, where the area is 300 acres, we also find that only one Inspector is appointed to look after each of those *alloms*. So, Mr. Van Ross explains that, in *alloms* which are developed, one Inspector is enough, and in *alloms* which are not developed, one Inspector may be appointed for two *alloms*.

PRESIDENT: In *alloms* which are not yet fully developed, one Inspector is not necessary.

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR: Anyhow Inspectors are not appointed in consideration of the area of each *allom* or of the work to be done there. My opinion is that seven Inspectors are not at all necessary. At least two may be reduced.

Then with regard to the construction of officers' quarters, I wish to get some information from Mr. Van Ross. Hitherto these officers, Mr Van Ross explains, were not accommodated because they had no quarters in the *alloms*. My doubt is whether the department has suffered any damage because there were no officers' quarters in the

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alloms I am told that certain petty officers and Inspectors who are deputed to these places do not like to work in the *alloms* on account of the climatic conditions there. That is why they want to get away from the *alloms*, and not for want of accommodation. I, therefore, do not see any urgency for the construction of officers' quarters at such great cost in this lean year.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, before proceeding further with the discussion, may I know whether it is in view of the expenditure entailed on the officers, owing to the paucity of proper residential quarters belonging to private people in the locality, that Government are now proposing to put up quarters for them? I wish to know whether these officers' quarters are proposed to be rented out or whether they are to be allowed to occupy them rent-free. The point of my question is this. Had there been houses belonging to private people, these officers would have been obliged to pay rent. Are the Government therefore proposing to levy any rent from these officers?

PRESIDENT: I do not think that this point is involved in the present question. That ought to be discussed separately.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Not directly involved. That would assist further discussion. I only wish to know whether it is not possible to decide upon the question of house-rent even now.

PRESIDENT: That may be thrown out as a suggestion.

RAO BAHADUR K. A. KRISHNA AIYANGAR: Sir, from the budget estimate for the coming year I find that the anticipated income on locally manufactured salt is Rs. 7 lakhs, as against Rs. 3,85,000 for the current year. I presume that a larger quantity of home-made salt will be placed in the market for consumption by the public. That, of course, will be rendered possible only by the development of local factories in Tamaracolam and its neighbourhood. If that be the correct position, I think the House owes a duty to the officers serving in the locality to provide them with residential quarters in the neighbourhood of the *alloms*, with a view to ensure stricter supervision and control. I approve of the suggestion of my friend Mr. P. K. Narayana Pillai that a reasonable rent may be levied from the parties, and the acceptance of that position by Government may incline my friends on this side of the House to recognise the necessity for providing residential quarters for Inspectors and their subordinates. I do not think that it is an item of expenditure that ought to be objected to.

As regards the question of the number of Inspectors, my non-official friends are suggesting that the *alloms* are situated sufficiently near one another to justify a reduction in the number of Inspectors. This argument has not been fairly met. I maintain that there is scope for reduction in the strength of the controlling staff. But I consider that the pay of the Inspectors does not admit of any reduction. That matter was fully discussed by the Salaries Committee and a definite decision arrived at. I think that the explanation with regard to transport charges is sufficiently convincing and I do not think public interests will be served by the motion being pressed for a division on that score.

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[Mr. P. K. Narayana Pillai.]

MR. S. KRISHNA AIYAR: Sir, I wish to make one observation. The year 1098 is going to be a lean year. We have been getting on for the past several years without any investment on officers' quarters. Would it not be better for us to postpone this expenditure to a fat year?

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: Sir, I have to say a word about the proposal to provide buildings for the officers in *alloms*. I have some personal knowledge of the subject. My father was Salt Superintendent in South Travancore and, when I was a boy, I had ample opportunities of visiting the Tamaracolam *allom*. I have lived there during vacation time and I have paid several visits to the *allom*. My father was a middle-aged man and he found it easy for him to walk to the *allom* whenever necessary. I have seen him going to the *allom* several times a day from the village of Tamaracolam. Tamaracolam is a healthy place and, I would also say, a growing village. I can very well appreciate the idea to provide quarters for officers residing in marshy places, where there is so much of malaria, or in places otherwise unhealthy. But the village of Tamaracolam is a very healthy village and it is quite possible for the officers residing in the village to look after their duties in the *allom*. There is another disadvantage in having the officers' quarters in the *allom* itself. It is well-known that, when an officer lives in the *allom*, the subordinates, *i. e.*, the peons, will not be able to devote that attention to public affairs which they would otherwise do. I do not want to make it more plain, because I think the House will guess what I have in mind. This proposal for officers' quarters is becoming a very usual thing in Travancore. Such a state of affairs does not exist in any other Indian State. As our finances are not so very good, I object to the proposal to build quarters for the use of officers, particularly at Tamaracolam, where it is absolutely unnecessary.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir—

PRESIDENT: You have already spoken.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, I only wanted to elicit some information when I rose before.

PRESIDENT: You can elicit information from a member who is speaking; but you cannot do that when there is no member speaking.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, under Order 72 of the Standing Orders, I could apply for any information.

PRESIDENT: But not when no one is in possession of the House.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, I was under the impression that I could apply to the Secretary for any information I wanted, and it was therefore that I asked for information on two points sometime ago.

PRESIDENT: If you want any information, you must ask the member who is in possession of the House, and not put a question when no member is speaking.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: But, Sir, the information in the present instance is one that I am entitled to ask the Government

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themselves direct, *i. e.*, to the Secretary in charge of the Legislative Council. That is the provision in the Standing Order quoted by me.

RAO BAHADUR K. A. KRISHNA AIYANGAR: Sir, may I say that, in the course of debate, oftentimes information on a particular point is felt to be necessary and the supply of that information forthwith by the official member would certainly induce us to accept the position taken up on behalf of the Government?

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, Order 72 of the Standing Orders runs thus:—"Any member may apply to the Secretary for any papers, returns or information connected with the business before the Council, and the Dewan shall determine whether such papers, returns or information, can be furnished." With respect to the business that is now before the House, I am requesting for information from the Secretary.

PRESIDENT: This rule implies that the Dewan should be in a position to determine whether such paper, information, etc., could be furnished or not. It is hardly to be expected that the President of the Council could determine this on the spur of the moment. In fact, the Dewan as such is not present here. I am only the President of the Council now.

MR. S. PARAMESVARA AIYAR: Sir, the Standing Order in question applies to requests for the furnishing of papers and returns or of information *not* in the course of debate.

RAO BAHADUR K. A KRISHNA AIYANGAR: It is one of the unwritten rules of debate that such information may be asked for and obtained during debate.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, I am bringing it under Standing Order No. 72. As for the explanation offered by the Secretary, I have to say that the order does not specify that during a debate no information can be called for.

PRESIDENT: I will at once say that Standing Order No. 72 does not apply to the present case. So far as this case is concerned, that is my ruling. We must see whether there is any other provision under which information can be called for.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: Sir, with reference to Order No 72 of the Standing Orders, I beg to submit that it does not apply to the information called for at the time of the debate. With reference to the other point, *viz.*, whether a member can apply for information to another member or not, I must say that every member has certainly got a right to interpellate another member while he speaks. But the moment he has finished his speech, he has no right to speak again, and he cannot, therefore, be interpellated after he has resumed his seat. If a member is discussing a particular question and wants further information, the official member in charge may supply that information when he makes his reply; but it is not for any other member who has already spoken to supply that information.

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[The President.]

In this particular instance, I do not think that Mr. Van Ross can be interpellated by Mr. Narayana Pillai, *after* he has closed his speech. Questions may be put to him when he is speaking again, any number of times. For example, Mr. Hoogewerf wanted information on a particular matter, and you have observed, Sir, that Mr. Van Ross may give it in the course of his final reply.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: During the course of Mr. Van Ross's address a certain question was put. Then there was a ruling from the chair that Mr. Van Ross need answer it only in the course of his reply.

PRESIDENT: That was in regard to a question put to Mr. Van Ross after he had sat down and after Mr. Hoogewerf had obtained possession of the House. Such questions can be answered only at the time when Mr. Van Ross makes his reply.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, I want a ruling as to whether I am entitled to speak now or not. I wanted only information then, and I want to speak on the motion now.

PRESIDENT: If you were under a misapprehension, I shall allow you to speak this time.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: I was under the impression that I could speak again.

MR. JOSEPH PANJIKARAN: Sir, according to Standing Order No. 18, "when for the purposes of explanation during discussion or for any other sufficient reason, any member has occasion to ask a question of another member on any matter then under the consideration of the Council, he shall ask the question through the President." So the member was only asking for information through the President in this instance.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: One member is not supposed to address another member direct at all. Members have to address the chair and not another member. That is the effect of Standing Order No. 18.

MR. JOSEPH PANJIKARAN: Now, Sir, a motion was under discussion before the House. In connection with that, a particular member wanted certain information, for which he applied through the President. By the asking of that information, is he deprived of the right of making his observations afterwards on the motion under discussion?

PRESIDENT: All that I say with reference to Standing Order No. 18 is that, if you put a question, you must put it to a member of the House who is *then* in possession of it, through me.

MR. JOSEPH PANJIKARAN: Only when the matter is before the House.

PRESIDENT: I am afraid I must enforce the rule, however inconvenient it is, that when a member is in possession of the House another member can put questions to that member for information. That does not prevent him from speaking on the motion before the

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House. On the other hand, when a member is himself in possession of the House, he speaks and cannot be deemed to be merely asking a question.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, would this ruling deprive me of the right of speaking on the present motion?

PRESIDENT: You can speak on this particular motion this time, as you were under a misapprehension.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, in the light of the information that I wanted to elicit from the Government, I would have found it possible not to oppose the position of the Government in this particular instance. Evidently, the Government have not made up their mind as to what to do and how to utilise the quarters that are to be erected. Officers are to be invited to reside in the officers' quarters. Suppose they subsequently recede, seeing that they could get better accommodation elsewhere. Would it then be possible for the Government to ask the officers concerned to occupy the identical quarters put up by them? Evidently, Government have not bestowed any thought as to whether they are going to realise anything by way of rent for the outlay upon this building. Since the Government have not developed any idea on that permit, my present position is that I support the motion and oppose Mr. Van Ross.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: Sir, my submission is that the Salt Department has not justified its existence. If proper attention had been bestowed on the question of the production of home-salt, I am inclined to think that the Salt Department ought to have been able to produce sufficient salt for consumption at least within Travancore.

Looking at the production of home salt, we find that, in 1094, it was 5 lakhs of *maunds*, while in 1095 it fell to 2,75,000 *maunds* Last year out of the 10,54,000 and odd *maunds* of salt consumed in Travancore, 7,00,000 and odd *maunds* came from outside. Under these circumstances, I am inclined to agree with my friend, Mr. Krishna Aiyar, that, as the year 1098 is a lean year, Mr. Van Ross has made his indent on the exchequer at the wrong time. It has to be remembered that subordinates are generally transferred to Tamaracolam and other places as a punishment. It is a sort of Andamans to the Excise Department, as Marayur is to the Forest Department. They have been managing without quarters for a long time. The Excise Commissioner has not been able to tell us that the production of home salt has been affected in any way by not providing quarters for the subordinates. Considering also the difficulties which my friend, Mr. P. K. Narayana Pillai, pointed out, I am of opinion that the construction of this new building may very well be postponed.

Regarding the office building in Mr. Karayalar's *allom*, I think a provision of Rs. 2,000 is rather extravagant. It is contemplated to be merely an Inspector's office. I have seen forest depôt offices and other Government buildings on a more modest scale, and I am sure that, if the Inspector's office alone is intended to be put up in Mr. Karayalar's *allom*, that could very well be managed at a cost of Rs. 1,000 at the utmost.

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[Mr. G. Paramesvaran Pillai.]

Regarding the pay of the Inspector, Mr. Krishna Aiyangar was telling us that the Salaries Committee considered the question in all its aspects. I have to point out to him that the area of the pans available for cultivation was 443 acres, of which 372 acres is all that was cultivated in 1096. So, between seven Inspectors and an Assistant Commissioner, they have to manage only 372 acres of salt pans; and, so far as the Inspectors are concerned, it works out only to 50 acres of pans *per* Inspector. I am sure Mr. Van Ross will meet us half way by reducing a few of them and that, at any rate, he would be content with the amount that he had last year. There is a difference of Rs. 2,576 between what he got in 1097 and what he has indented for in 1098. A reduction of Rs. 1,000 out of an allotment of Rs. 2,000 on account of the office in Mr. Karayalar's *allo n* should be quite acceptable to Mr. Van Ross. Moreover, so far as Arukutty is concerned, he emphasised that these quarters were meant for both officers and staff. On looking at that provision, I also find that the building is meant for both officers and staff. If he had come with a modest request for Rs. 10,000, just as in the case of Arukutty, he would have had a better case. I, therefore, propose an amendment that the allotment be cut down by Rs. 23,576, which would mean (i) the postponement of the construction of buildings in the Tamaracolam *allom* costing Rs. 20,000, (ii) the reduction of Rs. 1,000 on account of the office building in Mr. Karayalar's *allo n*, and (iii) the difference between the provision for the staff of Inspectors last year and what is budgeted for this year.

MR. K. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir, the question before the House is not whether, if these quarters are constructed, they will be useful or not. The question is whether these could not wait and whether the work is of such an urgent character as to necessitate so much of money being spent on it, at a time like this when we are hardly able to make both ends meet; and when in other portions of the budget, several works of a very important character and perhaps of a more urgent nature have been held up for want of funds.

I do not say that these officers' quarters need not be constructed at all. My proposal is that the construction of these buildings may be held up until we have sufficient funds. No case has been made out to show that the work is of such an urgent nature as to necessitate expenditure just now.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir, I should certainly consider that it was most inopportune on the part of the Excise Commissioner to have indented for Rs. 20,000 for the construction of quarters for the officers and staff at Tamaracolam at this particular juncture. I have my own sympathies for the staff; but, at the same time, I should also think that they should wait for another year until perhaps we are in a position to determine whether our finances are going to improve. I am in perfect agreement with Mr. K. P. Raman Pillai in his amendment.

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MR. K. C. MAMMEN MAPPILLAI: Sir, my own impression is that a good number of buildings for the Excise, Public Works and Forest Departments are constructed in out-of-the-way places which could very well be avoided. I have seen such buildings growing, of late, in Alwaye. I have heard of an instance of a very costly building, which was put up at a cost of Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 40,000, lying unused for so many years. It is somewhere near Alwaye, about 30 or 40 miles to the north of that town. I was told by some officer that the building was originally intended for the Divisional Forest Officer and his staff, but recently a forest guard was occupying it. The officer above mentioned saw it, and was surprised at the enormous sum spent on such buildings. I think proposals are sent up by these so-called development departments and Government always regard such proposals with great consideration. Therefore, unless Mr. Van Ross can adduce very substantial reasons to show why this building should not be postponed for another year till the members are able to satisfy themselves by enquiry whether this building can be avoided or postponed, I should be inclined to vote against the provision of any money for either this building or for any kind of building for any department, at this time when there is very distinct need for economy and retrenchment.

With regard to the staff, I do not want to stand in the way of the department getting a sufficient number of men.

In regard to the building, as I said, I have seen such quarters unnecessarily lying unused in other places. If these buildings can wait for all these years, I do not see why they should not wait for another year. Hence I suggest that this item of work be postponed for another year.

MR. A. GOVINDA MENON: Sir, I also support the amendment moved by Mr. K. P. Raman Pillai. As regards the building, however urgent and necessary it may be, in view of our financial position in the coming year, I think it is better to postpone its erection at least for a year. As regards the staff, the number of Inspectors recommended by the Salaries Committee is only three. Perhaps, further development might have taken place in the manufacture of salt. Therefore four Inspectors would be sufficient for the work done there. The Salaries Committee has also said that the Assistant Commissioner who ought to be in charge of these salt *alloms* may be utilised to supervise the distilleries, etc.

PRESIDENT: It is a non-votable item.

MR. A. GOVINDA MENON: I am not going to say anything about the salary of these officers. A reduction in the staff, as proposed by Mr. K. P. Raman Pillai, could surely be made without damage to efficiency.

MR. K. C. RAJA RAJA VARMA: Sir, I beg to support Mr. K. P. Raman Pillai, because the present staff of officers is much in excess of the actual requirements. Even though we have 443 acres available for conversion into salt pans, only 373 acres are now being worked up. Moreover, the salt pans are concentrated in two or three places, so that a substantial reduction can be made in the staff as also in the provision

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[The President.]

for officers' quarters. I wish to point out that these items may be postponed to a better year than 1098, which is one attended with great financial difficulties. I confess that I am not convinced of the urgent necessity of providing for the above items next year; and I therefore support Mr. K. P. Raman Pillai.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI: Sir, I am not convinced by the arguments of Mr. Van Ross in respect of the points that I urged. So I do not find it possible to withdraw my motion. However, I accept the amendment brought forward by Mr. K. P. Raman Pillai.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, I may tell the House that the construction of quarters for officers and men working in the Tamaracolam *alloms* is absolutely necessary, both for the comfort and convenience of these wretched men as well as for the safety of the salt manufactured. When one shift is on guard duty, the other shift lives two miles away; and if any theft takes place at night, there is no succour near. If men are not near the *alloms*, it means the theft of salt. Some members have said that we have waited for several years and, therefore, asked why we should not wait for another year. I have no objection to postpone this expenditure in deference to the wishes of the House.

With regard to the Inspectors, I am sorry that I cannot accept the suggestion to reduce their number. The work of the Inspectors is such that one man should be in charge of one factory; and one Inspector cannot be in two factories at the same time. That is physically impossible. Hence I am sorry I cannot accede to that request of the other side of the House. I have made a reduction in the number of peons from 160 to 125. Wherever it was possible, I have made a reduction. So far as this item is concerned, the matter was considered very carefully and it was not found practicable to make any reduction.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: Will Mr. Van Ross be satisfied with Rs. 1,000 for the office building at Mr. Karayalar's new *allom*?

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, I consulted the Chief Engineer. He says the cost of materials is very high. The materials have to be carried to the spot from a distance, and hence there is transport cost also. In these circumstances, I am not able to reduce anything from my demand under this item.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: Sir, I accept the suggestion of Mr. Van Ross that the construction of officers' quarters at Tamaracolam be postponed and a cut of Rs. 20,000 made under that item.

The House accepted the cut, and both the motion of Mr. Padmanabha Pillai and the amendment of Mr. K. P. Raman Pillai were, by leave, withdrawn.

PRESIDENT: The question is that the Government be granted a sum of Rs. 1·57 lakhs after deducting Rs. 20,000, *i. e.*, Rs. 1.37 lakhs under Demand III—Salt.

The grant was made.

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